

***\*Please note: All articles are available in the attached PDF.***

***\*To receive the Daily News Digest in your inbox, email [R6Press@epa.gov](mailto:R6Press@epa.gov).***

***\*Daily News Digest is for the informational use of EPA Region 6 employees. Please do not distribute further.***

**1 – St. John Council demands regulators do better job communicating Denka emission information, Baton Rouge Advocate, 6/11/19**

[https://www.theadvocate.com/new\\_orleans/news/article\\_66698f46-8cb0-11e9-a2ff-dbc827d2c733.html](https://www.theadvocate.com/new_orleans/news/article_66698f46-8cb0-11e9-a2ff-dbc827d2c733.html)

The issue of the Denka Performance Elastomer chemical plant and its emission of chloroprene — a “likely carcinogen,” according to the EPA — into the air is rarely discussed at St. John the Baptist Parish Council meetings. But Tuesday night was different, with council members beginning the meeting by harshly criticizing how regulators communicate with the parish.

**2 – Radioactive material found in Gert Town, city confirms, WDSU, 6/11/19**

<https://www.wdsu.com/article/radioactive-material-found-in-gert-town-city-confirms/27922490>

Radioactive material was found on Lowerline Street in Gert Town, according to New Orleans city officials. The city confirms that the material was safely removed out of an abundance of caution. Repaving is expected by the end of the week.

**3 – EPA back in Gert Town, scanning for radiation, WWL, 6/11/19**

<https://www.wwltv.com/video/news/epa-back-in-gert-town-scanning-for-radiation/289-36abfbd9-2bca-47a2-8871-cdccb267c2de>

(video)

**4 – Refiners sue EPA over year-round E15 sales, E&E News, 6/11/19**

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2019/06/11/stories/1060550649>

An industry group for petroleum refiners has sued EPA to block year-round sales of higher-ethanol fuel, just as President Trump prepares to tout the plan in Iowa.

**5 – Environmental groups challenge federal offshore drilling rule changes, New Orleans Times-Picayune, 6/11/19**

<https://www.nola.com/environment/2019/06/environmental-groups-challenge-federal-offshore-drilling-rule-changes.html>

Ten environmental groups, including the New Orleans-based Healthy Gulf, are suing to challenge what they view as the Trump administration’s decision to weaken critical safety rules created after the nation’s worst offshore drilling disaster.

**6 – 2 cities still in major flood stage, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, 6/12/19**

<https://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2019/jun/12/2-cities-still-in-major-flood-stage-201/?news-arkansas>

While the Arkansas River has dropped below flood stage in many areas of the state, the Desha County town of Pendleton is still inundated with floodwaters.

**7 – Science Advisory Board to review clean cars rollback, E&E News, 6/12/19**

<https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/2019/06/12/stories/1060553389>

An independent panel of experts is poised to scrutinize one of the Trump administration's most consequential environmental rollbacks. EPA's Science Advisory Board voted last week to review the science behind the proposed overhaul of Obama-era clean car standards.

**8 – Arkansas Dentist Pioneers Green Practice, KUAF, 6/12/19**

<https://www.kuaf.com/post/arkansas-dentist-pioneers-green-practice#stream/0>

Increasingly, businesses around the world are choosing to go green. In Fayetteville, Arkansas one dentist has long been leading the way towards environmental sustainable dentistry.

**9 – Studies show growing gap between CO2 'hopes and reality', E&E News, 6/12/19**

<https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/2019/06/12/stories/1060554779>

Global climate awareness may never have been higher, but two recent studies show just how much work the world has to do to turn its carbon-cutting dreams into reality.

**10 – Facebook is building a massive solar project in Texas, San Antonio Express-News, 6/11/19**

<https://www.mysanantonio.com/news/texas/article/Facebook-is-building-a-massive-solar-project-in-13967226.php>

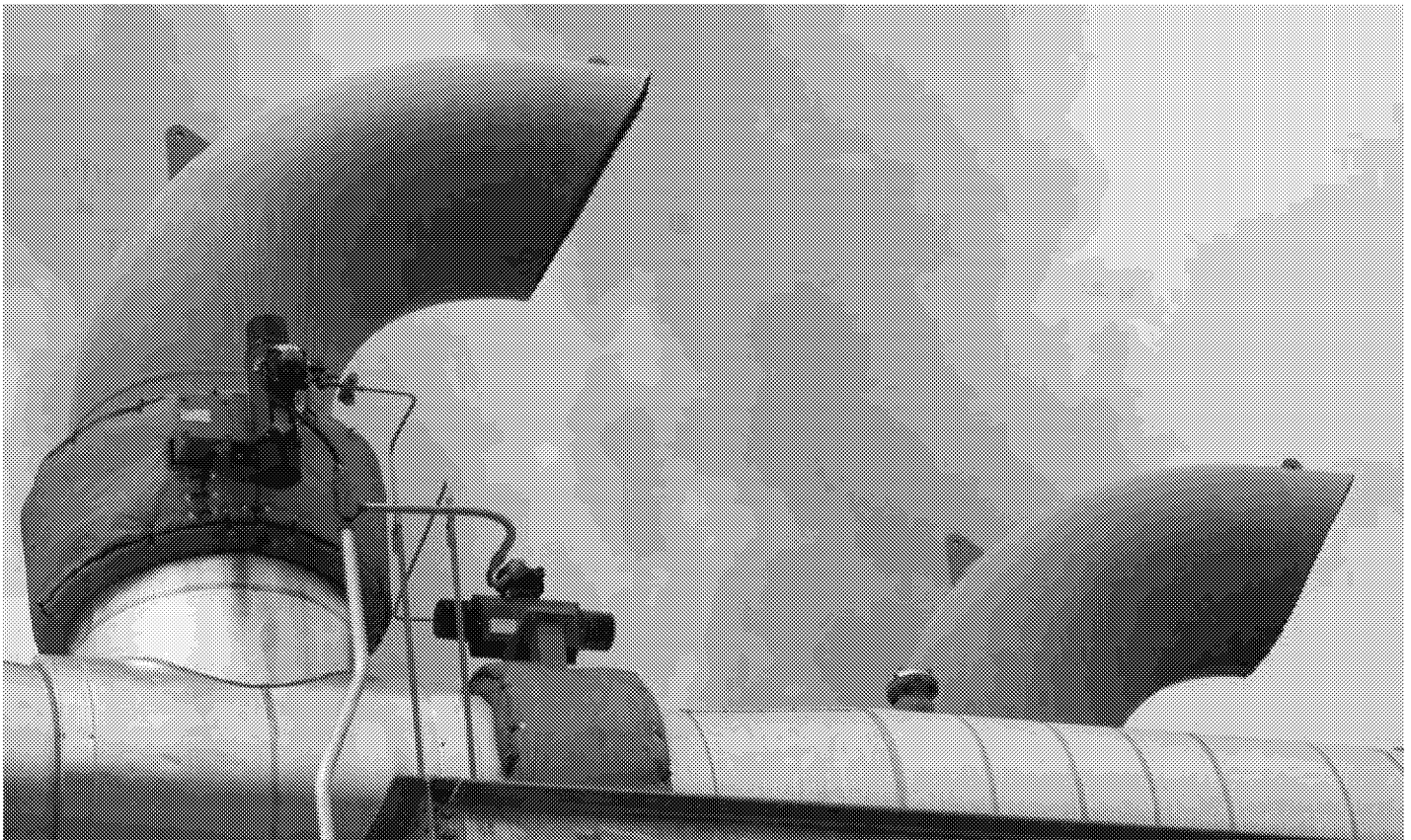
Facebook is building a massive solar farm in West Texas that's believed to be one of the largest solar projects in the nation and the social media giant's first direct investment in renewable energy.

---

[https://www.theadvocate.com/new\\_orleans/news/article\\_66698f46-8cb0-11e9-a2ff-dbc827d2c733.html](https://www.theadvocate.com/new_orleans/news/article_66698f46-8cb0-11e9-a2ff-dbc827d2c733.html)

# St. John Council demands regulators do better job communicating Denka emission information

BY NICK REIMANN | NREIMANN@THEADVOCATE.COM JUN 11, 2019 - 8:21 PM



A new Regenerative thermal oxidizer (RTO) sits at the Denka plant in Laplace, La., Monday, April 9, 2018. The RTO destroys chloroprene, a chemical proven to cause health issues over a lifetime.

Advocate Staff photo by SOPHIA GERMER

[Buy Now](#)

The issue of the Denka Performance Elastomer chemical plant and its emission of chloroprene — a “likely carcinogen,” according to the EPA — into the air is rarely discussed at St. John the Baptist Parish Council meetings.

But Tuesday night was different, with council members beginning the meeting by harshly criticizing how regulators communicate with the parish, after it was revealed last month that the plant — straddled between LaPlace and Reserve — had failed to reduce emissions by an agreed-upon amount.

Councilman Lennix “Tweet” Madere, who represents the Reserve area, said he reached out to Chuck Carr Brown, head of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, asking him to come to a meeting after seeing media reports in May that Denka had failed to lower its emissions by a promised 85%.

That’s the amount Denka and LDEQ agreed upon in a 2017 consent order, with Denka spending over \$35 million since that time on equipment to lower emissions.

---

**Denka plant falls short on mandated cut to chloroprene emissions**

---

But Brown refused, Madere said, citing pending legal action by Councilman Larry Sorapuru against the agency over its handling of the Denka issue as a reason not to come.

Instead, LDEQ sent a letter to the council last week, promising that LDEQ would continue to work with Denka to reduce emissions and would seek feedback from the St. John Parish community through “occasional public meetings and regular visits to the area.”

Council members quickly jumped on that line, saying they remember only one public meeting Brown held in the community — in 2016.

“It’s evident LDEQ isn’t going to come here,” Council Chairman Thomas Malik said.

Council members said they shouldn’t have been caught off-guard that Denka had failed to meet its emissions-reduction threshold. LDEQ informed the company of its failure in a letter last month, giving the plant 30 days to reach the 85% reduction or possibly face fines.

Denka officials have said the plant reduced emissions by around 70% over the past four years and would have been further along by now if it hadn’t been for some hang-ups along the way. A company spokesman said the company will meet its reduction goal.

But council members want to be involved in the future, even though Madere acknowledged that the council has no power to regulate Denka’s emissions — that’s up to LDEQ.

“The belief is the parish knows a lot more than we’re saying, but we really don’t,” he said.

Travis Perrilloux, interim director of public safety for St. John, also said he doesn’t recall ever being contacted by LDEQ or Denka over chloroprene emissions.

“Don’t you think you should be contacted instead of having Mr. Madere track this man down?” Sorapuru asked.

“Yes,” Perrilloux replied.

Baileigh Rebowe Helm, a spokeswoman for Parish President Natalie Robottom, said a potential solution for the council is to have the EPA’s David Gray regularly come to meetings.

Gray, the acting administrator for EPA Region 6 — which includes Louisiana — has attended meetings of the environmental activist group Concerned Citizens of St. John, occasionally providing updates regarding Denka.

Council members agreed that seems like the best option right now.

“I don’t want to see any plant closed, you know, but if they can’t do what DEQ asks them to do, we’ve got to find something out to help our people,” said Councilman Larry Snyder.

---

FOLLOW NICK REIMANN ON TWITTER, @NICKSREIMANN.



**Keanu Reeves Didn't Know He was the Newest Internet Boyfriend**

Sponsored by Connatix



24  
Shares



NOWCAST

Live Now



WDSU



Advertisement

## Radioactive material found in Gert Town, city confirms



Updated: 3:31 PM CDT Jun 11, 2019

**WDSU Digital Team**

**NEW ORLEANS** — Radioactive material was found on Lowerline Street in Gert Town, according to New Orleans city officials.



www.gma.com

24  
Shares



Advertisement

Repaving is expected by the end of the week.

Last year, Mayor LaToya Cantrell's administration learned about the presence of underground material producing radiation below the road surface at the intersection of Lowerline Street and Coolidge Court.

The origin of the material is unknown and while it has been properly contained since being identified, it is now being removed out of an abundance of caution, according to the city.

After learning about the contamination, the city and its maintenance contractor engaged Baton Rouge-based ARS Aleut Remediation (AAR) in December 2018 to remove and dispose of the small amount of contamination.

During the course of this work, the team, which also included the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, discovered that the contamination area was larger than originally anticipated and would need to be addressed as part of a subsequent effort.

Since that time, the city has been working alongside the Environmental Protection Agency and the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality to develop a plan to address the contamination area.





WDSU 7  
NEW ORLEANS, LA

24  
Shares



conducted with the lowest risk possible.

In advance of the start of this work, representatives from the city's Health Department and the Department of Public Works canvassed within a five block radius of the location to talk with residents and distribute information about the existing hazards, and what to expect during the removal process.

The removal and disposal plan ensures the safety of residents, workers and the environment during and following the removal. Representatives from EPA, LDEQ and the city will be onsite throughout operations to answer questions and be sure that any possible exposure is below the established limits. Crew members are wearing personal protective equipment (PPE), including disposable coveralls and gloves, which are necessary to limit their exposure.

Work began on May 28 and will take about three weeks to complete.

Crews have completed excavating the site, removing all of the underground material and placing it in large containers.

Pending test results, the containers will be moved to either Utah or New Mexico. Repaving will begin Monday and is anticipated to be complete by the end of next week.

Follow this story to get instant e-mail alerts from **WDSU** on the latest developments and related topics.

Follow this story

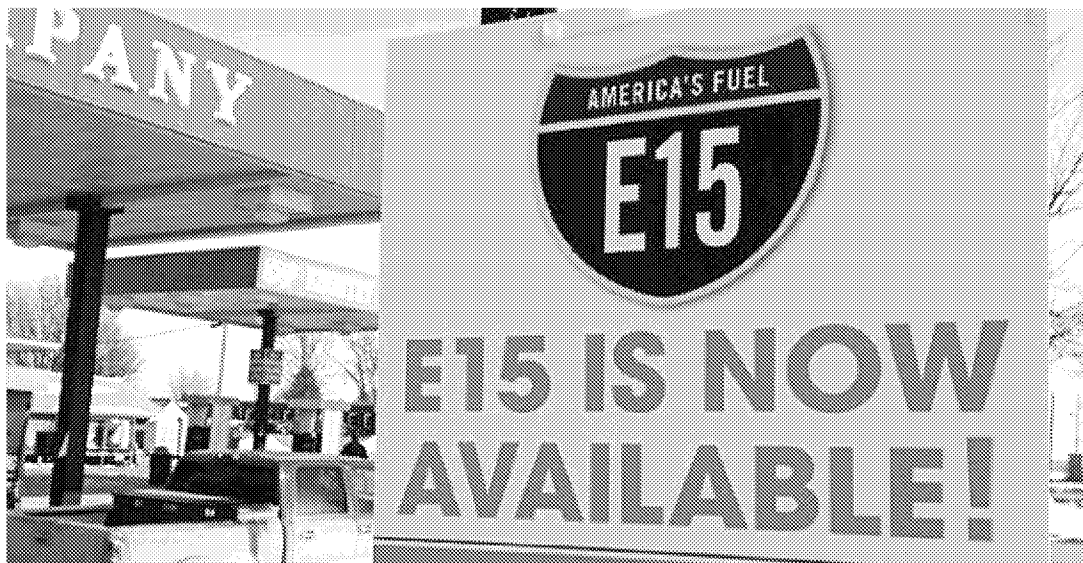
WDSU NEW ORLEANS

## BIOFUELS

### Refiners sue EPA over year-round E15 sales

Marc Heller, E&E News reporter

Published: Tuesday, June 11, 2019



The refining industry has sued EPA to block the E15 rule. Iowa Renewable Fuels Association

An industry group for petroleum refiners has sued EPA to block year-round sales of higher-ethanol fuel, just as President Trump prepares to tout the plan in Iowa.

The dueling storylines for the corn-based fuel kick off what promises to be a lengthy fight with political overtones in the Corn Belt.

In a [petition](#) filed yesterday in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, the American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers asked for a review of EPA's final rule on E15 fuel published the same day.

Petroleum groups say EPA overstepped its authority in granting E15 a waiver from ozone-related regulations that have prohibited sales in the summer.

E15 is 15% ethanol, 85% gasoline. Most fuel sold at gas stations is 10% ethanol, or E10.

"We fully expect the court's ruling to align with what the EPA and Congress have each previously concluded: the plain language of the Clean Air Act does not authorize an RVP waiver expansion beyond E10," said Chet Thompson, president and CEO of the AFPM. "Nothing has changed — a waiver for E15 is unlawful, plain and simple."

In finalizing rules to allow summer sales, EPA officials said the agency was reinterpreting key sections of the Clean Air Act dealing with the seasonal waivers, called Reid vapor pressure rules, or RVP.

Officials have said they believe the move is in keeping with Congress' intent to gradually increase the amount of ethanol in the fuel supply and that the industry has grown enough that E10 alone won't meet the intent of the renewable fuel standard, enacted in 2005 and updated in 2007 ([Greenwire](#), May 31).

Expanding availability for E15 is a top priority for the ethanol industry, and biofuel groups have cheered EPA's move, which came in time for this summer. President Trump has promised throughout his administration to boost ethanol, including allowing year-round E15 sales.

The legal filing assures that a court fight over the issue will continue as the 2020 presidential campaign gathers steam. The group did not ask the court to suspend E15 sales while the case proceeds.

Trump is set to travel to an ethanol plant in Council Bluffs, Iowa, today to deliver remarks on biofuels policy, including E15. EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler is scheduled to join him.

Iowa Sens. Chuck Grassley and Joni Ernst, as well as Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds, all Republicans, said in an opinion piece published in the Council Bluffs *Daily Nonpareil* that the new policy on E15 "will allow for an open marketplace with more fuel options, encourage competition and drive down fuel costs — all while improving the environment."

"With every visit to Iowa, he reaffirms his support for ethanol, which supports more than 43,000 Iowa-based jobs, as Iowa accounts for approximately 27 percent of national ethanol production and is the top corn- and ethanol-producing state in the U.S.," they said.

Ethanol industry groups praised the administration's move ahead of today's event. The American Coalition for Ethanol said summer availability will gradually give the industry a boost and comes at a good time for farmers who've struggled with low prices and unfavorable trade policies.

"This won't be an overnight success, but a large obstacle is removed, so we're looking forward to working with retailers, who have been standing on the sidelines not offering E15 because of the previous RVP regulatory limit and convincing them to get in the game," the coalition said in a statement.

AFPM said the RFS itself is flawed.

"An E15 waiver is in no way a fix for the shortcomings of the RFS, which has for years plagued markets with volatility," Thompson said. "Following his visit to Iowa, we invite the President to listen to refinery employees and constituents in Pennsylvania, Ohio and elsewhere to fully understand the economic harm the RFS is causing and the overwhelming need for its reform."

---

Email: [mheller@esnews.net](mailto:mheller@esnews.net)

---

*The essential news for energy & environment professionals*

© 1996-2019 Environment & Energy Publishing, LLC [Privacy and Data Practices Policy](#) [Site Map](#) [Contact Us](#)

---

## Environmental groups challenge federal offshore drilling rule changes

Posted Jun 11, 5:06 PM



Fireboats try to extinguish the blaze on the Deepwater Horizon south of Venice on April 21, 2010, a day after an explosion on the oil rig. Environmental groups are challenging Trump administration changes in more stringent drilling rules adopted by the Obama administration after the disaster.

20

10  
shares

By The Associated Press

Menu

Set  
Weather



Subscribe

Sign In Search

The rule changes announced in March will make oil and gas exploration and development off the Pacific, Atlantic, Alaska, and Gulf coasts "significantly more dangerous," according to the federal lawsuit filed Tuesday (June 11) by national groups including the Sierra Club and Defenders of Wildlife, and groups on the Gulf and Carolina coasts.

---

---

"Rolling back safety standards while trying to aggressively expand offshore drilling just boggles the mind. So we're asking the court to step in to protect workers, wildlife, coastal communities and our climate," Kristen Monsell, a senior attorney at the Center for Biological Diversity, another plaintiff, said in a news release.

Tiffany Gray, spokeswoman for the Interior Department's Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, said in an email that the agency cannot comment about pending litigation.

The rules were imposed six years after the Deepwater Horizon explosion, which killed 11 workers as BP PLC executives celebrated the project's safety record at the rig on April 20, 2010. Over the next 87 days, the well nearly a mile (1.6 kilometers) deep in the Gulf of Mexico spewed out an estimated 130 million gallons (493 million liters) of oil.

Scientists estimate the oil killed or seriously hurt "billions, if not trillions" of animals, the lawsuit said. The government declared a fisheries disaster. BP says its costs have topped \$60 billion.

Interior Secretary David Bernhardt said in March that the changes would eliminate unnecessary regulation while keeping safety and environmental protection

[Menu](#)

[Set  
Weather](#)



[Subscribe](#)

[Sign In](#) [Search](#)

---

"The National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling ... noted in its Report to the President that industry had been given decades to regulate itself in terms of worker safety and environmental stewardship and had done neither," the lawsuit stated.

The 44-page lawsuit, filed by lawyers for the environmental legal nonprofit Earthjustice, said the changes will put "workers' lives, coastal communities, and the environment at substantial risk."

According to the suit, the administration has eliminated independent inspections of safety equipment, slashed standards for testing and inspecting equipment, weakened requirements for blowout preventers, and let existing drilling rigs use outdated standards for blowout preventers.

The rules were set in place in 2016. Over the previous decade, there were an average of five deaths and five losses of well control a year, but there were none in 2017, the lawsuit said. The rules probably contributed to that reduction, the lawsuit said.

The Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, the Interior Department agency created to oversee drilling safety, "failed to provide any good reason or rational basis" for the changes, or to pay enough attention to their environmental effects, according to the suit.

---

---

It also said the agency "engaged in covert rulemaking ... allegedly relying on information it did not disclose to the public, and adding industry's requested changes" without putting them up for public comment.

Officials have estimated the Trump administration revisions will save the oil industry over \$1.5 billion over the next 10 years.

"On the Gulf Coast, these safety standards have very real implications for workers, the environment and our coastal economy," said Cynthia Sarthou, executive director of Healthy Gulf, a Gulf of Mexico environmental group based in New Orleans. "This administration claims the cost is a 'burden' to one of the most profitable industries in the world. That is not a sound justification to roll back these necessary safeguards enacted to prevent another catastrophic blowout like the BP disaster."

The other groups listed as plaintiffs in the suit are the Sierra Club, Natural Resources Defense Council, Center for Biological Diversity, Defenders of Wildlife, Friends of the Earth, North Carolina Coastal Federation, and the South Carolina Coastal Conservation League.

Story by Janet McConnaughey, The Associated Press

[View Comments \(20\)](#)

Note to readers: if you purchase something through one of our affiliate links we may earn a commission.

**ADVANCE**  
**LOCAL**

Registration on or use of this site constitutes acceptance of our [User Agreement](#) and [Privacy Policy](#)

© 2019 NOLA Media Group. All rights reserved ([About Us](#)).

The material on this site may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, cached or otherwise used, except with the prior written permission of NOLA

Media Group.

**Community Rules** apply to all content you upload or otherwise submit to this site.

► [Ad Choices](#)



[Search](#) [Latest](#) [Traffic](#) [#Gazette200](#) [Brummett Online](#) [Listen](#) [Digital replica](#) [FAQ](#) [Weather](#)

ADVERTISEMENT

## 2 cities still in major flood stage

Desha County not on disaster declaration, waiting for drop

by Dale Ellis | Today at 3:54 a.m. | Updated June 12, 2019 at 3:54 a.m.

0 COMMENTS

0

Follow



Most roads around Pendleton remain closed and under water Tuesday as the receding Arkansas River remains above flood stage. - Photo by Dale Ellis

PENDLETON -- While the Arkansas River has dropped below flood stage in many areas of the state, the Desha County town of Pendleton is still inundated with

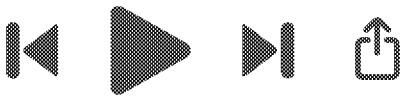
LISTEN: This morning's top headlines





The Arkansas River remained in major flood stage Tuesday at Pine Bluff in Jefferson County and will be for a few more days, the National Weather Service office in North Little Rock.

00:00 00:00 at



I don't want to see this anymore.

## Daily Email Newsletters

Stay connected and informed with ArkansasOnline.com news updates delivered straight to your inbox.

"At Pine Bluff, they are still just a little over 46 feet," Reynolds said on Tuesday. "They look like they'll drop out of major flood stage sometime around [tonight] into Thursday."

Major flood stage in Pine Bluff is 45 feet. Flood stage is 42 feet.

ADVERTISING

The river is forecast to drop below major flood stage of 33 feet at Pendleton about the same time. Flood stage at Pendleton is 31 feet.

"It's going to continue to go down for the next several days into the later part of the month here," Reynolds said. "We have that location coming off of flood, it looks like, tentatively talking right now, a week from today."

LISTEN: This morning's top headlines



Reynolds said the weather forecast for the next week is over the next few days and predicts no precipitation of

it

"We're looking pretty dry through Saturday and then a chance of showers and thunderstorms Saturday night

I don't want to see this anymore.

3  
e

areas across the state could see maybe an inch or two in some of the heaviest storms during that time period. But otherwise, at least for that part, we're not really looking for that to add a whole lot into the equation."

Reynolds said forecasters are a bit more concerned by a system that could affect the area late next week.

"That could impact more of the state and also, northeast Oklahoma," he said, "that kind of brought our problems recently in the first place."

At Pendleton, a few residents businesses have just started cleaning up near the Arkansas River bridge that bisects the town.

Glendon Lambert, who owns a motel and some rental property in Pendleton, said residents kept watching and waiting as reports of flooding upriver rolled in but didn't realize until it was too late how severe the flooding was going to be.

"We sat here and watched it on television, so we knew what was going on," Lambert said. "We were kind of thinking we were going to get flooded out. We knew the flood stage was going to get up so high, but the record here was 34.1 [feet]."

Lambert said he had his motel surveyed and found it to be 36.4 feet above the bottom of the river.

"So I figured I was going to be OK," he said. "But then they increased it every time they would make a report on it and kept easing it up a half a foot or so. And when they got up to 37, I decided I'd better start sandbagging it."

ARTICLE CONTINUES BELOW

## More related headlines

River in Little Rock now below flood level; it's expected to continue falling throughout state

Arkansas River calmer, ravaged levee holding

River crests in 2 spots, starts to fall

Levee failing, time to leave, residents told

Governor: Flood ruin 'new territory'

Arkansas River to crest in Little Rock higher, later than previously predicted; forecasters say rain may cause problems

ADVERTISEMENT LISTEN: This morning's top headlines

▼ ▲

I don't want to see this anymore.

But even sandbagging didn't help, Lambert said. The water found its way into the building anyway.

"Some of it seeped through the sandbags," he said. "Some of it may have come in through the sewer system, and I have a drain in the floor in the laundry room. I didn't sandbag that, and I don't know if water came in that way or not. I wasn't there to watch it. And if you aren't watching it, it doesn't take long. Even seep water will get inside."

Lambert said most of the town evacuated by the time the river began to spill into the streets.

"There's a few that tried to ride it out, two or three of them," he said. "But, later on, they called for help. It just got to be more than they could stand."

Looking across the water at the motel he owns, which is an extended stay facility, Lambert said there were seven families staying there when the flood came. Five families went to stay with friends or relatives, but two, he said, had nowhere to go. So he said he put them up at his farm in two campers he had recently purchased.

"But everything they had was in those rooms," he said.

Lambert said he had moved a small dump trailer to the property and he plans to begin cleaning up as early as today or the next day if the water has receded enough by then.

"We're going to pick up the sandbags so we can get inside," he said, "and we're just going to have to bring everything out of the rooms and set it all outside, then see how far we're going to have to go up the walls to replace the Sheetrock."

Asked if he had flood insurance, Lambert shook his head.

"No," he said. "I never flooded before, so I thought I was going to be OK. They said '34 foot, 35 foot,' and I said, 'well, I'm still good at 36 or a little over.' But when they got to 37 I decided I'd better sandbag. But it didn't do any good."

Lambert said most of the people in the community had

"Most of the people who live here are semiretired, or they just do the best they can," he said. "We just need FEMA help."

I don't want to see this anymore.

The Desha County judge, Richard Tindall, said that beside Pendleton, about 40 miles of roadway was destroyed in Snow Lake, a sparsely populated area to the north of Pendleton nestled between the White River and the Mississippi River.

"In places, the water was 5 feet deep," Tindall said. "People were trapped there and couldn't get out."

Tindall said one thing that has residents and county officials alike concerned is the fact that Desha County was not included in Gov. Asa Hutchinson's request to President Donald Trump for a disaster declaration. Eight counties were listed, but Desha County was not among them. The disaster declaration was approved Saturday by the president.

Tindall said he had talked with the governor's office and was told the county could not be declared a disaster area until the river crested and officials were able to fly over and confirm the flood damage.

"I can tell you that it is making the local people very uncomfortable that we are not included on the same disaster declaration that the rest of the state is," he said.

Hutchinson said in an interview Tuesday that he understood many counties that were affected by the Arkansas River flooding were not mentioned in the initial major disaster declaration sent to Trump and that he fully anticipates the list of counties to grow as more damage is assessed.

"We had to get this declaration in quickly," Hutchinson said. "We have not fully assessed the damage in Desha County and Pope County. There will be counties added to that when we finish further assessments."

In Jefferson County, County Judge Gerald Robinson said the Office of Emergency Management was out Monday doing damage assessments. He said so far in the Island Harbor Estates neighborhood and on Riverside Drive inside the city limit of Pine Bluff, emergency officials found 42 homes destroyed, 47 homes with major damage, 12 homes with minor damage and seven homes that were affected by flooding.

Other hard-hit areas of the county are Wright-Pastoria and Swan Lake. Robinson said those assessments will be made in coming days as water continues to recede. He said no assessments of infrastructure damage have been made yet.

"The water is still too high," he said.

*Information for this article was contributed by Clara Turnc*

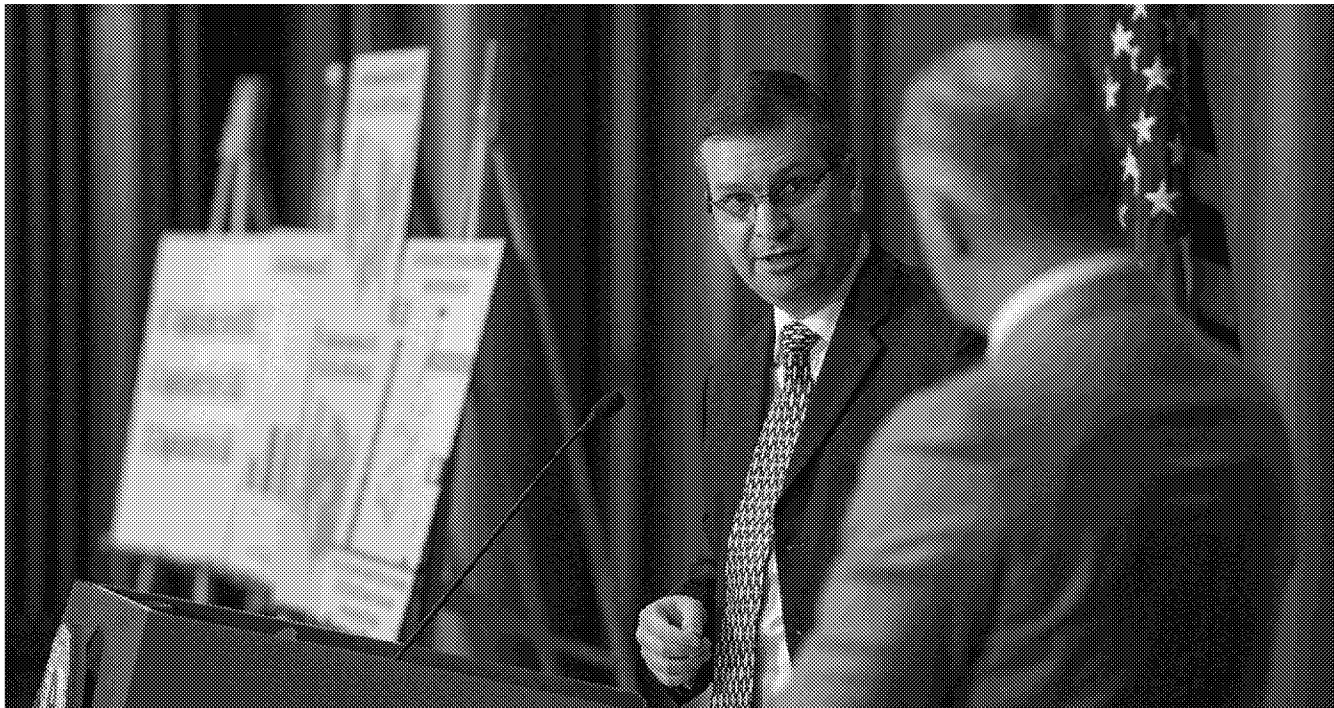
LISTEN: This morning's top headlines

▼ ▲

EPA

## Science Advisory Board to review clean cars rollback

Maxine Joselow, E&E News reporter • Published: Wednesday, June 12, 2019



Michael Honeycutt is the chairman of EPA's Science Advisory Board. The panel is reviewing the science behind Obama-era clean car rules. Texas Commission on Environmental Quality/Twitter

An independent panel of experts is poised to scrutinize one of the Trump administration's most consequential environmental rollbacks.

EPA's Science Advisory Board voted last week to review the science behind the proposed overhaul of Obama-era clean car standards. The 45-member board, which is tasked with advising EPA on a range of scientific matters, will zero in on the technical analysis underpinning the proposal (*E&E News PM*, June 6).

Critics of the Trump EPA say the review stands to highlight errors in that analysis that could inform future lawsuits against the administration.

"We anticipate this review will paint a more complete picture ... of the current proposal's inconsistencies and faulty conclusions," said Robbie Diamond, president and CEO of Securing America's Future Energy.

Jeff Alson, a former staffer in EPA's Office of Transportation and Air Quality, said the administration's analysis "doesn't pass the laugh test."

"I think it was clearly based on politics, not science," he said.

The rollback, formally known as the "Safer Affordable Fuel-Efficient (SAFE) Vehicles Rule," is aimed at significantly weakening Obama-era greenhouse gas and fuel economy standards for light-duty vehicles.

President Obama made the standards a key plank of his climate agenda. He envisioned getting cars to travel an average of 54.5 mpg by 2025.

But EPA and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration are proposing to freeze fuel economy requirements at an average of 37 mpg.

The two agencies are also proposing to withdraw California's Clean Air Act waiver for greenhouse gases, which allows the state to set tougher tailpipe pollution rules than the federal government.

The scientific board's review will serve as an important check on the Trump EPA, said Trish Koman, a professor at the University of Michigan School of Public Health.

"EPA is a science-based agency, and it has very large public health responsibilities. So the law requires, and the public expects, EPA to obtain independent science advice," said Koman, who worked as an EPA scientist for 22 years before leaving the agency in 2012.

"The agency, as an institution, really needs to have procedures in place so they can do a rigorous look at the analysis and provide the best information to decisionmakers and the public," she added.

## 'What is going on there?'

The SAB meeting last week took place in downtown Washington, D.C., and spanned two days.

During the first day, the board grappled with how to approach the clean cars rollback and, in particular, the role California plays.

The proposal sets up a clash with the California Air Resources Board, which has historically issued tougher tailpipe pollution rules than the federal government. Thirteen states have adopted those tougher requirements.

An SAB work group chaired by Alison Cullen, a public health expert at the University of Washington, recommended that the full board review the proposal only if EPA and CARB fail to reach agreement on "harmonized" tailpipe standards applying to the entire country.

"If they don't harmonize the rule between CARB and EPA, then I think it would be interesting for SAB to consider what are the differences," Cullen said. "Why are they not able to harmonize? And [are] aspects of the science being differently emphasized? What is going on there?"

The board also confronted the rollback's effect on greenhouse gas emissions and climate change.

An analysis by the Rhodium Group, an economic consulting firm, found that the proposal would lead to an additional 32 million to 114 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions.

But John Christy, a professor of atmospheric sciences at the University of Alabama, Huntsville, argued that the proposal would not affect emissions at all. EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler appointed Christy, who rejects mainstream climate science, to the board in January ([\*E&E News PM\*](#), Jan. 31).

The rollback "will have zero effect on the climate," Christy said at the meeting. "So this is going to be a policy issue. There's no science in terms of its impact on the climate."

SAB Chairman Michael Honeycutt proposed that the board defer action on the rollback until its next meeting. But that remark prompted grumbles of opposition from several members. The board then agreed by a show of hands to conduct the review.

## 'Foot-dragging'

The SAB faces a severely compressed time window for its review. The Trump administration is seeking to finalize the rollback this month, although experts have questioned whether it can meet this self-imposed deadline ([\*Climatewire\*](#), June 3).

"If the administration is going to proceed on the time frame it mentioned, it's going to be very hard for the SAB to do an analysis of the scope and complexity that's needed," said Chris Frey, a professor of environmental engineering at North Carolina State University.

Frey, who served on the SAB from 2012 to 2018, accused Wheeler of using delay tactics to foster the time crunch. The board sent EPA a notice of its intent to review the rollback last June; Wheeler responded 10 months later.

"It shouldn't take 10 months for the administrator to respond," Frey said. "In my opinion, the administrator is foot-dragging to let the clock run out and hope the SAB doesn't get its act together to do anything."

EPA spokesman Michael Abboud pushed back.

"In his first few months on the job, Administrator Wheeler has strived to engage with the SAB on a more regular basis, which is why he provided his April letter to the board and appeared before the Board last week to take questions," Abboud said in an email to E&E News.

"Administrator Wheeler will continue to work with the SAB and try to improve relations that the previous administration took for granted," he said.

## Lawsuits on the horizon

Still, the board's review could ultimately provide ammunition for future lawsuits.

"It would be informative to future rulemaking efforts to have an SAB opinion on record. And it may also be informative to litigants," Frey said.

California Attorney General Xavier Becerra (D), a vocal foe of President Trump, has promised to sue once the rollback is finalized. So have a litany of environmental groups.

"We all know that there will be immediate litigation as soon as the rollback is completed," said Alson, the former EPA staffer. "If the Science Advisory Board were to go on record with concerns about how the science and technical analysis were carried out, I would think that would be exactly the type of information judges would be interested in."

The SAB could help California and green groups pinpoint specific errors in the administration's technical analysis, Alson said.

In particular, the administration has argued that the rollback will prevent 12,700 deaths on the nation's roads. To justify this claim, it pointed to something called the "scrappage model," which predicts when people will "scrap" an older car and purchase a newer model.

But critics say the administration manipulated the scrappage model to get its desired result.

"The analysis underlying your proposal simply makes no sense," CARB Chairwoman Mary Nichols testified at a hearing in Fresno, Calif., last year, adding, "[These] claims are not only absurd on their face; they are not supportable by fact."

A group of 11 prominent researchers published a paper in *Science* magazine last year accusing the administration of misrepresenting their findings in its technical analysis. They say the administration not only manipulated their work on the scrappage model but also on fleet size, compliance costs and other factors (*Climatewire*, Dec. 7, 2018).

"There were just so many assumptions made in that analysis that are not defensible," Alson said. "The paper in *Science* magazine was just one example."

*Reporter Sean Reilly contributed.*

---

Twitter: @maxinejoselow | Email: [mjoselow@eenews.net](mailto:mjoselow@eenews.net)

---

*The essential news for energy & environment professionals*

© 1996-2019 Environment & Energy Publishing, LLC [Privacy and Data Practices Policy](#) [Site Map](#) [Contact Us](#)

EMISSIONS

## Studies show growing gap between CO2 'hopes and reality'

Benjamin Storrow, E&E News reporter • Published: Wednesday, June 12, 2019



Global carbon emissions jumped last year, according to BP PLC's annual energy review. A thermal power plant in China is pictured. Huangdan2090/Wikimedia Commons

Global climate awareness may never have been higher, but two recent studies show just how much work the world has to do to turn its carbon-cutting dreams into reality.

The first [study](#), released last week by the World Bank, found 5% of carbon prices employed around the world today are stringent enough to keep global temperatures from rising by more than 2 degrees Celsius.

BP PLC released the second yesterday in the form of its [annual statistical review](#) of global energy markets. The bottom line: Energy emissions worldwide were up 2% in 2018, the largest year-over-year increase since 2011.

"My guess is that when our successors look back at Statistical Reviews from around this period, they will observe a world in which there was growing societal awareness and demands for urgent action on climate change, but where the actual energy data continued to move stubbornly in the wrong direction," Spencer Dale, BP's chief economist, observed in a post outlining the oil company's findings.

He framed it "a growing mismatch between hopes and reality."

The BP report shows why. Renewables grew by 14.5% worldwide in 2018, a robust if slightly lower rate than previous years. But much of those gains were erased by global energy demand, which surged by 2.9%. That pushed up demand for coal by 1.4% and natural gas by 5.3%.

The trend was especially prevalent in the United States, where energy consumption rose by 3.5% in 2018, reversing a decade of declines. The figure is the highest spike in American energy demand in three decades.

More countries and states than ever are employing carbon-pricing policies like cap and trade or carbon taxes, the World Bank found. It reported that 46 countries and 28 subnational entities employ carbon pricing, covering about 20% of global emissions.

Yet those prices were often too low to spur the sort of emissions cuts needed to avoid the worst impacts of global warming, the report found. Only Sweden, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Finland and France employ carbon taxes within or above the \$40-\$80-per-ton range recommended by the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Carbon pricing is not the only area where the world is falling short, but it is indicative of the wider challenges facing climate policy, said Robert Stavins, an economics professor who studies carbon pricing at Harvard University.

"You're asking voters in a representative democracy to incur costs now, when a lot of benefits are going to go to people in other countries and to future voters," he said. "This is a huge challenge. It won't be addressed this



year or next year. An important step in my view is the Paris climate agreement, in that the first rung on the ladder is the initial set of NDCs [nationally determined contributions]."

The dynamic has led to a push and pull in carbon pricing efforts. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau helped put in place a national carbon tax last year in his country but is facing a difficult path to reelection this fall. A win by Canada's Conservative Party would almost certainly spell doom to Trudeau's carbon pricing plan. Voters in Australia and France have also bucked at the prospect of forcing polluters to pay for their emissions.

Not all the news is grim. Carbon prices are on the rise in California and the European Union's emissions trading program thanks to strong economic growth and reforms meant to limit the number of excess carbon credits. But they still remain far below the level recommended by the IPCC.

Then there is China. The world's largest emitter is set to introduce an emissions trading program for its power sector next year. The program is expected to eventually grow to encompass half the country's emissions, greatly expanding the amount of carbon subject to a carbon price worldwide.

Like many economists, Christopher Knittel of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology reckons the solution is to employ a more stringent carbon price. But he is not holding his breath.

The World Bank report, he said, "tells us carbon policies are a tough sell even when the vast majority of people admit climate change is real, it's man-made and we need to do something about it."

And so the gap between the world's emissions and carbon-cutting goals continues to grow.

---

Twitter: [@bstorrow](#) | Email: [bstorrow@eenews.net](mailto:bstorrow@eenews.net)

---

*The essential news for energy & environment professionals*

© 1996-2019 Environment & Energy Publishing, LLC [Privacy and Data Practices Policy](#) [Site Map](#) [Contact Us](#)

---

Listen Live · KUAF 91.3 HD  
NPR's Morning Edition

LOADING...



# Arkansas Dentist Pioneers Green Practice

By DANIEL CARUTH / ARKANSAS PUBLIC MEDIA • 17 HOURS AGO

[Share \(http://facebook.com/sharer.php?](http://facebook.com/sharer.php?)[u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.tinyurl.com%2Fyyw3w95n&t=Arkansas%20Dentist%20Pioneers%20Green%20Practice\)](http://facebook.com/sharer.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.tinyurl.com%2Fyyw3w95n&t=Arkansas%20Dentist%20Pioneers%20Green%20Practice)[Tweet \(http://twitter.com/intent/tweet?](http://twitter.com/intent/tweet?)[url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.tinyurl.com%2Fyyw3w95n&text=Arkansas%20Dentist%20Pioneers%20Green%20Practice\)](http://twitter.com/intent/tweet?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.tinyurl.com%2Fyyw3w95n&text=Arkansas%20Dentist%20Pioneers%20Green%20Practice)[Email \(mailto:?](mailto:)[subject=Arkansas%20Dentist%20Pioneers%20Green%20Practice&body=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.tinyurl.com%2Fyyw3w95n\)](mailto:subject=Arkansas%20Dentist%20Pioneers%20Green%20Practice&body=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.tinyurl.com%2Fyyw3w95n)

Listen



([https://www.kasu.org/sites/kasu/files/styles/card\\_280/public/201906/mercury-002\\_1.jpg](https://www.kasu.org/sites/kasu/files/styles/card_280/public/201906/mercury-002_1.jpg)).

*Dr. Robert Hodous, DDS, shows a mercury separator he uses to collect the heavy metal before it enters waterways.*

CREDIT ROBERT G HODOUS, DDS

Increasingly, businesses around the world are choosing to go green. In Fayetteville, Arkansas one dentist has long been leading the way towards environmental sustainable dentistry.

Since 2008, Dr. Robert Hodous, DDS (<https://drhodous.com/>), has been reducing dental toxic waste in his practice as a broad mission. "I look at it as solid waste, pollution to the environment, and to potentially [my] office," he says. Dental clinics contribute significant amounts of environmental waste, according to the Eco-Dentistry Association. That includes disposable sterilization products, chemicals from traditional x-ray fixers, heavy metals and lead foils. The Eco-Dentistry Association (<https://ecodentistry.org/green-dental-professionals/dental-office-waste/>) currently is the only national green dentist certifying board in the U.S. But Hodous, who is not member, instead employs a checklist of waste reduction practices based on EPA and dental industry standards. He's invested in digital x-ray technology to reduce

radiation exposure to patients and uses paperless billing, water-flow restricting faucets and recyclable equipment when possible. He also distills his own water to sterilize equipment and has installed a mercury

separator. A type of tooth filling amalgam made with mercury, silver, tin and copper is deemed safe by the American Dental Association. But according to the World Health Organization, exposure to small amounts of mercury in the environment may cause serious health problems, including impaired fetal and early childhood development. Mercury may also have toxic effects on the nervous, digestive and immune systems, as well as on lungs, kidneys, skin and eyes.

"I actually scavenge mercury so it doesn't get into the [waste] system," Hodous says. "We haven't done mercury fillings for 35 years in my practice, but we still remove quite a few of them. And that [mercury] creates a waste that just goes into the sewer system and eventually into our environment."

The Environmental Protection Agency (<https://www.epa.gov/eg/dental-effluent-guidelines>) estimates 103,000 dental offices still use or remove mercury amalgam in the United States, releasing 5.1 tons of mercury into the environment each year. Currently 12 states have mandatory regulations on mercury waste for dentists, but a pending new dental effluent rule from EPA will require most practices to install a mercury pump, similar to the one Hodous uses, by July 2020.

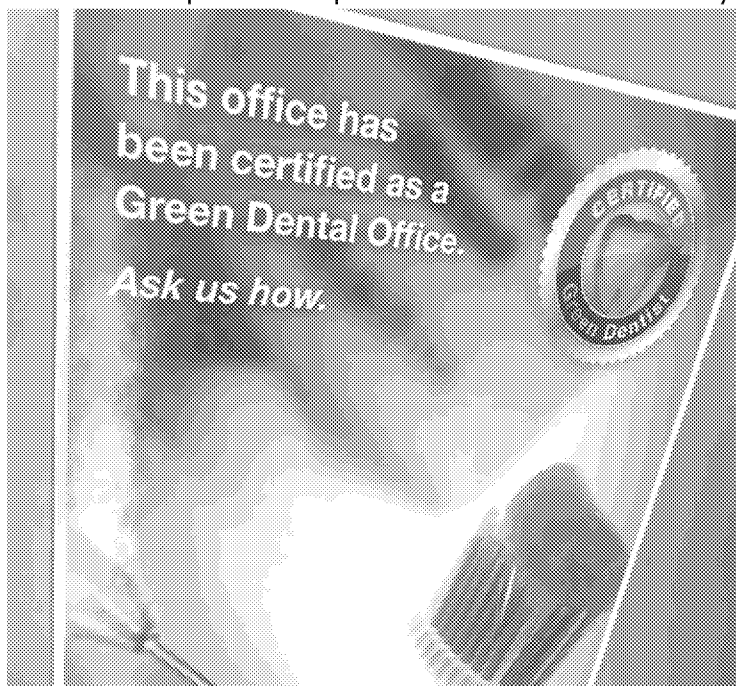
Arkansas is not among the 12 states already implementing these changes. Nor do the Arkansas State Board of Dental Examiners and Arkansas State Dental Association offer "green" certification, track or regulate dentists who advertise environmentally sustainable practices. Hodous is the only certified green dentist in Arkansas, through the Green Dental Marketing Group, which he helped to found.

"[Dentists] have choices about what we use, in terms of equipment," he explains. "Also we have an intimate relationship with the patients that I think a lot of businesses may not," referring to an increasing number of consumers specifically seeking green dental care.

Marlene Blair, an independent oral hygienist who is a member of Dr. Hodous's holistic team, says oral health and the environment are inseparable, which is why she stresses using natural alternatives with patients.

"I myself tend to like to use the least chemical products possible just because of the oral microbiome," she says. "It's an active living world inside your mouth."

A healthy oral microbiome (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5960472/>), Blair says, which consists of beneficial bacteria that inhabit the gums, teeth and tongue can contribute to overall health. Emerging research indicates that an impaired microbiome can lead to health problems including cardiac disease. Her practice underscores Hodous' message: that a healthy environment contributes to oral health. "There's more to it than just a cleaning," Hodous adds. "This is not just my mouth, it's my whole



(<https://www.kasu.org/sites/kasu/files/styles/medium/>)

*In 2008 Hodous began using green practices in his office.*  
CREDIT ROBERT G HODOUS, DDS



([https://www.kasu.org/sites/kasu/files/styles/medium/public/201906/Marlene\\_3.jpg](https://www.kasu.org/sites/kasu/files/styles/medium/public/201906/Marlene_3.jpg))

Hygienist Marlene Blair specializes in analyzing patients' oral microbiome.

CREDIT ROBERT G HODOUS, DDS

body, and it's outside, it's my environment, it's where I live."

*This story is produced by Arkansas Public Media, a statewide journalism collaboration among partner stations KUAR, KUAF, KASU and KTXK, and community partners AETN, and the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies. Arkansas Public Media's series on oral health in Arkansas is funded through a grant from the Delta Dental of Arkansas Foundation, and with the support of its partner stations.*

Increasingly, businesses around the world are choosing to go green. In Fayetteville, Arkansas one dentist has long been leading the way towards environmental sustainable dentistry.

Since 2008, Dr. Robert Hodous, DDS

(<https://drhodous.com/>), has been reducing dental toxic waste in his practice as a broad mission. "I look at it as solid waste, pollution to the environment, and to potentially [my] office," he says. Dental clinics

contribute significant amounts of environmental waste, according to the Eco-Dentistry Association. That includes disposable sterilization products, chemicals from traditional x-ray fixers, heavy metals and lead foils. The Eco-Dentistry Association (<https://ecodentistry.org/green-dental-professionals/dental-office-waste/>) currently is the only national green dentist certifying board in the U.S. But Hodous, who is not member, instead employs a checklist of waste reduction practices based on EPA and dental industry standards. He's invested in digital x-ray technology to reduce radiation exposure to patients and uses paperless billing, water-flow restricting faucets and recyclable equipment when possible. He also distills his own water to sterilize equipment and has installed a mercury separator. A type of tooth filling amalgam made with mercury, silver, tin and copper is deemed safe by the American Dental Association. But according to the World Health Organization, exposure to small amounts of mercury in the environment may cause serious health problems, including impaired fetal and early childhood development. Mercury may also have toxic effects on the nervous, digestive and immune systems, as well as on lungs, kidneys, skin and eyes.

"I actually scavenge mercury so it doesn't get into the [waste] system," Hodous says. "We haven't done mercury fillings for 35 years in my practice, but we still remove quite a few of them. And that [mercury] creates a waste that just goes into the sewer system and eventually into our environment."

The Environmental Protection Agency (<https://www.epa.gov/eg/dental-effluent-guidelines>) estimates 103,000 dental offices still use or remove mercury amalgam in the United States, releasing 5.1 tons of mercury into the environment each year. Currently 12 states have mandatory regulations on mercury waste for dentists, but a pending new dental effluent rule from EPA will require most practices to install a mercury pump, similar to the one Hodous uses, by July 2020.

Arkansas is not among the 12 states already implementing these changes. Nor do the Arkansas State Board of Dental Examiners and Arkansas State Dental Association offer “green” certification, track or regulate dentists who advertise environmentally sustainable practices. Hodous is the only certified green dentist in Arkansas, through the Green Dental Marketing Group, which he helped to found.

“[Dentists] have choices about what we use, in terms of equipment,” he explains. “Also we have an intimate relationship with the patients that I think a lot of businesses may not,” referring to an increasing number of consumers specifically seeking green dental care.

Marlene Blair, an independent oral hygienist who is a member of Dr. Hodous's holistic team, says oral health and the environment are inseparable, which is why she stresses using natural alternatives with patients.

“I myself tend to like to use the least chemical products possible just because of the oral microbiome,” she says. “It's an active living world inside your mouth.”

A healthy oral microbiome (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5960472/>), Blair says, which consists of beneficial bacteria that inhabit the gums, teeth and tongue can contribute to overall health. Emerging research indicates that an impaired microbiome can lead to health problems including cardiac disease. Her practice underscores Hodous’ message: that a healthy environment contributes to oral health. “There's more to it than just a cleaning,” Hodous adds. “This is not just my mouth, it's my whole body, and it's outside, it's my environment, it's where I live.”

*This story is produced by Arkansas Public Media, a statewide journalism collaboration among partner stations KUAR, KUAF, KASU and KTXK, and community partners AETN, and the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies. Arkansas Public Media's series on oral health in Arkansas is funded through a grant from the Delta Dental of Arkansas Foundation, and with the support of its partner stations.*



Copyright 2019 KASU. To see more, visit [KASU \(http://www.kasu.org\)](http://www.kasu.org).

([https://www.kasu.org/sites/kasu/files/styles/card\\_280/public/201906/delta\\_dental\\_logo\\_0.jpg](https://www.kasu.org/sites/kasu/files/styles/card_280/public/201906/delta_dental_logo_0.jpg))

Share ([http://facebook.com/sharer.php?](http://facebook.com/sharer.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.tinyurl.com%2Fyyw3w95n&t=Arkansas%20Dentist%20Pioneers%20Green%20Practice)

[u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.tinyurl.com%2Fyyw3w95n&t=Arkansas%20Dentist%20Pioneers%20Green%20Practice](http%3A%2F%2Fwww.tinyurl.com%2Fyyw3w95n&t=Arkansas%20Dentist%20Pioneers%20Green%20Practice))

Tweet ([http://twitter.com/intent/tweet?](http://twitter.com/intent/tweet?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.tinyurl.com%2Fyyw3w95n&text=Arkansas%20Dentist%20Pioneers%20Green%20Practice)

[url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.tinyurl.com%2Fyyw3w95n&text=Arkansas%20Dentist%20Pioneers%20Green%20Practice](http%3A%2F%2Fwww.tinyurl.com%2Fyyw3w95n&text=Arkansas%20Dentist%20Pioneers%20Green%20Practice))

Email ([mailto:?](mailto:?subject=Arkansas%20Dentist%20Pioneers%20Green%20Practice&body=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.tinyurl.com%2Fyyw3w95n)

[subject=Arkansas%20Dentist%20Pioneers%20Green%20Practice&body=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.tinyurl.com%2Fyyw3w95n](mailto:?subject=Arkansas%20Dentist%20Pioneers%20Green%20Practice&body=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.tinyurl.com%2Fyyw3w95n))

0 Comments

KUAF

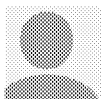
Login

Recommend

Tweet

Share

Sort by Best



Start the discussion...

LOG IN WITH

OR SIGN UP WITH DISQUS ?

Name

Be the first to comment.

Subscribe

Add Disqus to your siteAdd DisqusAdd

Disqus' Privacy PolicyPrivacy PolicyPrivacy



(<http://www.uark.edu>)

UNIVERSITY OF  
ARKANSAS



(<http://kuaf.com/programs/ozarks-large>)



(<http://kuaf.com/programs/note>)

(<http://www.npr.org>)